



Journal

Holy Week 2010



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THE SWALLOWS ARE HERE

They start from some little remote place near the tip of Argentina, so I am told, and fly 8,000 miles to another little remote place that happens to be where I live. They fly over troubled lands. Below the birds are people who are hungry, oppressed, angry. This is a distressed planet and the times are difficult. We seem to have a knack for making things worse, for seeing those with whom we disagree as demons against whom any kind of reprisal is morally justified. Also, below these birds have been men, women and children facing all the pains of the human condition including anxiety and sickness.

At Starcross we start looking for the swallows on St. Joseph's Day, March 19, but we know they will always be here by Holy Week. Many of us set aside the days before Good Friday and Easter to remember how we wanted to live our lives and to try to bring our aspirations closer to the reality of our existence. We can feel the changes in nature as the vernal equinox heralds spring. The religious traditions of our ancestors also give us powerful experiences like Passover and the Pascal Season.



Buddhists in Japan, at the time of the equinox, celebrate Higan, which means "the other shore." In our life journey we face a raging river of illusions including passion, pain, greed, hatred. However, if we battle the strong currents, the temptations, and reach the other shore we gain enlightenment.

The common theme in nature and in tradition seems to be to move from darkness to light. We need that motion as individuals, families, societies. You will be in our thoughts as we walk through this week we call "Holy." More trees are in bloom each



day at Starcross and we have put here a few recent pictures. We can imagine similar wondrous things where you live. At this time of year it is easy to understand that all of life is a miracle. In Egypt, at the time of the equinox, people celebrate Sham el-Nessim which means “smelling the breeze.” They go out to the country or the river to experience and remember breath, that fundamental gift of life which in the Judeo-Christian traditions we often label “Spirit.”

In my little greenhouse the new shoots are coming up from seeds. Soon they will be big enough to go out into the garden. As I went to open the door this morning I found a snail. My first thought was “Here is an enemy!” then I remembered a poem from Issa

Here at my old house
I see the face of God
in the face of a snail.

Or, as the ancient chant puts it; “Where charity and love are found, there is God.”
May this be a blessed time for you and those in your heart.

Your brother,

Toby

